

**MIDDLE ATLANTIC
Region 1
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Expanded Information Access for Public Health Workers
Southeastern NY Library Resources Council (SENYLRC)
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Executive Summary

Project Summary: Goal of the project was to expand access for public health workers, to empower county health department staff through NLM resources, mobile access, and document delivery by partnering with the Dutchess County (NY) Department of Health, which would serve as a pilot for others in the SENYLRC eight-county service region. Dutchess County was selected based on strong leadership as evidenced by online posting of annual reports and other data, mission and values, as well as the county and department's use of technology. Importantly, the county includes two high-needs, low-income urban areas as well as very rural under-served communities, a microcosm of the health information and delivery challenges existing in the entire region. Initial planning involved key administrators at the Dutchess County Department of Health (DCDOH) and the focus was on the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (The Council on Linkages between Academia and Public Health Practice) related to Information for the new accreditation process in public health. The Public Health Accreditation Board, after years of research and testing, launched the national voluntary public health accreditation program in September 2011 and this outreach project was integrated into the preparation and planning process for the DCDOH. Led for the past 18 years by Dr. Michael Caldwell, a nationally engaged commissioner, DCDOH administrators recognized the opportunity to enhance the information skills, knowledge and use of professional resources by the department and to enhance the department's "ability to develop and promote quality health education programs." (Letter of project Support, Nov.15,2011). The needs assessment sought to identify staff health information needs in the workplace, resources currently being used, and whether gaps in health information resource use or information access may exist so that any training could be customized appropriately. The two workshop/training sessions were highly rated by most of the participants while the goal of enhancing access through document delivery is being met as demonstrated by SENYLRC's processing of 20 requests for articles during the past four weeks.

Minority Populations Served

African Americans: No
American Indians/Alaska Natives: No
Asian Americans: No
Hispanics/Latinos: No
Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: No
Other: No

Approaches and Interventions Used

Goal: To improve awareness of and access to information for public health workers using NLM resources, mobile access, and document delivery.

As delineated in the methodology of the application, creation of a Dutchess County(DC)Health Information Resources Assessment, using earlier results and surveys from other identified projects within NYS, to determine awareness of, need for, and interest in education and training.

While the Project Coordinator researched other NLM funded projects and public health information resources, both partners collaborated on development of the assessment. DCDOH staff then transferred the final 21 questions to Survey Monkey and requested completion by DOH staff. The responses (75%) were analyzed by the DC bio-statistician and results served as the basis for shared planning of a conference day. A team of DOH staff was created not only to review content and materials as developed by SENYLRC and MAR Outreach Coordinator but to arrange for and carry out the administrative details of a required half-day workshop for all DOH staff and an afternoon session for invited staff from Nursing, Communicable Disease, and Early Intervention Divisions. Evaluation forms were jointly developed and results shared.

Evaluation Activities

Conference Day evaluation included questions on the resources covered and their relevance to the practice of public health, whether they were new, well known or underutilized prior to training. The evaluation form also asked about additional information and/or training needs and 8 individuals indicated they would like some follow-up.

March 29 Morning Session, "Evidence-Based Public Health Resources & Strategies": Participants completed an evaluation and were asked what percentage of the material covered on the conference day was new to them. 22% reported that all the information covered was new to them, 44% reported that at least 3/4 of the information was new and 16% reported that at least half of the information was new. 97% of the participants said that the program met their expectations. Many positive comments (4 pages worth) were submitted expressing appreciation and even excitement about new resources, about 35 of the attendees indicated they would change behavior as a result: use EBP resources, sign up for PH and topic email lists, research in reliable resources, use MedlinePlus, PubMed, PIPH, Grey Literature through NYAM, NAACHO Model Project database, and Best Practices, not always google but use Google Scholar, EBP resources shown, etc. The presentations will be posted on the DC web site for review by staff. Chairman of the Board of Health requested packets and executive summary of presentation and resources for Fellow Board members.

March 29 Workshop for Nursing, Communicable Disease Control, and Early Intervention with 19 attending. Evaluation form results indicated:

Instructional materials used effectively: 95% agree, 5% somewhat agree

Instructional materials relevant/useful: 89% agree, 11% somewhat agree

Met Expectations/Goals&Objectives: 89% agree, 11% somewhat agree

Acquired knowledge & skills I can use: 89% agree, 11% somewhat agree

Expectations for program were met: 18 95% Yes 1(5%) No

Very few of the resources covered were known or used by the attendees including the Maternal & Child Health Library and portal based at Georgetown University, the AAP bright Futures or other excellent resources and very few realized the rich offerings of MedlinePlus. There was confusion about Medscape, MedlinePlus and PubMed and how to get full text and where to find best practices. Comments: "Enthusiasm of presenters; all the resources-WOW! information on websites and how to locate; information on different reliable websites; very helpful-thank you; I want to make use of resources, thank you for letting us know about them; I enjoyed your presentation and you provided us with some great information."

Outputs: Awareness/Training, Information Access/Document Delivery:

10 on-site consultations/training sessions the exact number projected, 3 additional extensive phone conversations for information, training, support brought the follow-up activity to 10% of the staff.

6 DCDoh staff signed up for Loansome Doc with SENYLRC during April.

5 staff created My NCBI accounts with librarian assistance.

8 staff signed up to send requests through the SENYLRC Request form.

100% of attending staff have packets with a range of NLM and local materials for review and reminders. Several absentees requested packets.

Article Requests: 22 requests for articles were processed, 2 during Jan/Feb. prior to conference/workshop and 20 following training during the month of April. Article requested by staff from: Communicable Disease Control, Environmental, Health Planning & Education, Medical Examiner, and Public Health Nursing Divisions as well as 1 from Administration.

Journals requested: Annals of Epidemiology, Annals of Medicine, Archives of Diseases in Childhood, Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, Birth, Cochrane Reviews, Computers in Human Behavior, Current Opinion in Neurology, Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness, Infectious Diseases in Clinical Practice, Journal of Bisexuality, Journal of Obstetric, Gynecological and Neonatal Nursing, Journal of the European

Academy of Dermatology and Venereology, Medical Anthropology Quarterly, Movement Disorders, NEJM, Neurology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA (Only NEJM had been a subscription)

Loans filled by locations through DOCLINE and 1 through OCLC:
11 within SENYLRC region, 2 within MARL (NY), 1 through NER (CT 1)
California, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Oregon, Wisconsin 2, Alberta, CA.

Outcomes: DC DOH staff have increased awareness of evidence-based practice, NLM and other government and professional association sponsored-resources which support best practices and comparative effectiveness research. DCDOH staff have access to free articles and document delivery of journal articles and research reports. Staff with enhanced expertise will mentor their colleagues to expand the information, training and use of quality resources and perhaps sign up for Loansome Doc or MyNCBI.

A review session will be held with the DC DoH Administrators in June to assess the project. In addition the goal of enhancing the web resource links on the DC DOH intranet to include covered resources not currently available, will be accomplished later this summer.

Problems or Barriers Encountered

Goals were accomplished despite a short implementation period, some staffing changes at the DOH, time constraints/ and multiple, simultaneous priority projects including strategic planning. Based on time and resource constraints, a follow-up award application was not submitted in April 2012 but DC DoH expressed interest in expanding the outreach efforts within the county and to involve departments the wider region in the future. While the original intention had been to invite key administrators from surrounding counties, none were able to participate although the DC County Executive and Chair of the Board of Health did attend. Based on limited access to workplace mobile devices (as opposed to personal), rather than training on mobile devices as initially projected, the Evidence-Based Practice in Public Health presentation program (Kate Flewelling presenter, MAR Outreach Coordinator) included a overview and mention with a brief informal session following the main program. The short contract period limited the range and numbers of follow-up activities as staff were simultaneously involved in strategic planning meeting and projects. It was difficult to find an acceptable way to provide food for the program, continental breakfast for 120 and lunch for 20 but we managed with funding outside of the NN/LM award.

Time constraints leave the DCDOH web site development as well as the final project evaluation by the partners to the summer.

While the award-funded iPad was not used as anticipated in trainings, it was used to project NLM mobile apps during the program intervals, as well as used in the small group meetings with DCDOH staff in the follow-up activities. The Project Coordinator also displayed resources in meetings with the planning team, such as the new PubMedHealth, the EBPH site from UMass, and with the Director of Public Health Nursing, showed the Maternal Child Health Library and other resources as part of the workshop development for her staff.

Continuation Plans

Document Delivery Services through SENYLRC will be continued for the DCDOH with financial support of the NYS Medical Information Services Program. The service is expected to continue indefinitely based on MISP funding (hospitals and acute care staff have priority) as the program is intended to fund health information access for all NY residents. SENYLRC will monitor usage and costs of EFTS and IFM fees and staffing requirements in order to determine whether further expansion is feasible. The initial response (the first four weeks following training) exceeded our expectations and seem to reflect pent-up demand. The individual follow-up and mentoring sessions were appreciated although some staff who wish to have help, could not find time to do so. Sharing with colleagues was encouraged, Loansome Doc Sign-up instructions were customized for DCDOH, Pubmed Tutorials and Quick Tour use was encouraged. The partners will review the outcomes of the project in June and work together to expand the information resources on the DCDOH intranet.

Both partners have an interest in expanding this project in some form to public health departments in the rest of the region, counties participating in the Hudson Valley Regional Health Officer's Network (Rockland, Ulster, Sullivan, Orange & Putnam) as well as Columbia and Greene counties which are also in SENYLRC's service region. There is interest in pursuing a future NLM grant for expansion (2013-14) and in involving the local community colleges as partners (they all provide health profession education) as health department staff other than MDs do not have access to the NYS Library and no direct services are provided by the NYSDOH Libray except to their own staff. The administrative leadership of DC is active in the region and state and would take a role in promoting and expanding the reach of this effort.

Impact

I would assess the project an unqualified success and the key administrators at DCDOH think so too. During the time of the project the DCDOH has its department journal subscriptions reduced by 1/2 (although only one tile was among the 20 different journals requested during the project). The department itself had shrunk from 145 to 126 during the past year. Two staff departed during the project and will not be replaced, so everyone is doing more with less. At the same time, accreditation and EBP require improved access to and use of information resources, so that this outreach was both timely and enormously valued by the partner organization. Since the project coordinator administers both the Hospital Library Services Program and the Medical Information Services Program in the region, she is committed to using existing resources to enhance health information access in the region and to promoting the many excellent free resources and services provided online through NLM and other government and government-supported agencies.

While we anticipated a need, the number of article requests during the month of April would exceed our projections and expectations. The range of journal titles requested included many that do not appear on available Public Health journal lists but reflect the wide-ranging activates under the public health umbrella.

The improved knowledge about PubMed and other PH resources, combined with the extension of document delivery service to the Department of Health demonstrates that SENYLRC is clearly fulfilling a need for improved access to health information in the region. Since the ongoing costs for the provision of interlibrary loan services can be subsidized through the existing SENYLRC administered NYS Medical Information Services Program, the project is successful in meeting the goals of that NYS program, as well as the goals of NNLM by expanding services to this category of underserved and unaffiliated health professionals.

The appreciation expressed by staff who have requested and received articles has been totally gratifying even to the point of "we love you" by one of the researchers. Projects and program development in the county are clearly better supported as a result of the outreach.

Project coordinator anticipates presenting the project results and lessons learned at the fall 2012 MLA/UNYOC chapter in Canada.

Other opportunities to share will be considered and results will be shared with the many public health librarians who shared their own materials and projects as well as other Reference and Research Library Resources Councils (3Rs) in New York State.

Results of the project will be shared with other Public Health departments in the SENYLRC region through the regional organization (7 additional counties)as well as Columbia-Greene Counties to assess whether there is interest in a similar awareness & education program, how it might be best delivered, and to explore additional ways of improving access to information for public health workers the wider mid-Hudson region.

Lessons Learned

All the preparation in advance cannot predict the exact nature of responses to outreach and educational efforts. We were fortunate in the choice of partner, had excellent support and cooperation from key administrators, and the importance of the training day held at the Henry A. Wallace center, FDR Presidential Library & Museum was emphasized by the appearance of the DC County Executive who acknowledged the work of the department and introduced himself to staff, many of whom had not yet seen him as he was only in his 3rd month. He saluted the DOH by saying it "was one department he did not have to worry about!"

The Commissioner's presentation " Essential Health Services, Accreditation, and Evidence-Based Public Health" which opened the training could not have been more appropriate- reviewing the assessment results, indicated when he saw need for improvement, relating the ten essentials of public health and the goals of accreditation to the practice of evidence-based public health and wholly supporting the training efforts and improved information access opportunities.

Establishing a collaboration with a willing and eager partner and administrative support is critical, and the provision of follow-up opportunities for individual staff will ensure that the new knowledge is acted upon and the enhanced access options are actually used. If you offer it, they will come, with adequate encouragement and administrative support but the environment in which training is delivered, must be welcoming and the content needs to be customized for the intended audience. The more targeting for needs, the better.

I would not do anything differently although a similar project could be accomplished with far less of a learning curve as public health was a new area for the coordinator. Using NLM existing resources identified through MAR Outreach Coordinators, NER staff, and the NLM project reports, NLM materials and MLA CE database made this project doable. Librarians are generous in sharing specialized knowledge and materials for adaption and re-use. The value of this help cannot be overstated. This was true in the development of the proposal and NLM support continued throughout.

Other

Assessment Instrument, Analysis of results, Presentations may be requested through the Project Coordinator at pcarroll@senylrc.org.

Attachment 1: AR summary data: Subcontractor activities